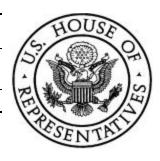
NEWS From:

Congressman Mike Honda

FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA



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Honda Joins with Pilots, Flight Attendants, Members of Congress to Push for Federalization of Airline Security

Washington, DC— Today, U.S. Congressman Mike Honda (D-San Jose) joined with Democratic Leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO), Members of Congress and pilots and flight attendants from across the nation in support of a bill to put federal law enforcement officers in charge of airport and airline security. The U.S. Senate has already passed a bill by a vote of 100-0 that calls for federalization of airport security screeners nationwide. As a member of the Aviation Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives, Honda has been outspoken in his support for the need to place the security screening function under direct federal authority. The House is scheduled to take up airline security legislation on Thursday, November 1.

"Overhauling our aviation security system is not a local issue, nor should it be a political issue—it is a national security issue and Congress has a clear duty to act by putting trained federal law enforcement officers in charge of airline security," said Honda. "September 11th should serve as a huge wake-up call for all us that the status quo is no longer acceptable when it comes to protecting the safety of the traveling public."

Experts agree that contracting out to the lowest bidder has created a workforce that suffers from high turnover, low pay, and low morale. The General Accounting Office (GAO) and the Transportation Department Inspector General have pointed out that privately-run security screening continues to fail to catch potentially threatening objects. Screeners are still often paid less than fast-food workers- resulting in an average employee turnover rate of more than 120% nationally and more than 400% at some airports. If federalized, professional screeners could be better recruited and retained, and would be paid salaries commensurate with the law enforcement responsibilities of screening. Under the bipartisan plan supported by Honda, federal screeners could be removed from their jobs if they fail to perform their duties.

"Hundreds of thousands of Americans still face the economic disaster of losing their jobs because the American public has little confidence in aviation security," continued Honda. "Until Congress acts to restore public confidence by federalizing and professionalizing security personnel in our airports by increasing pay, training, accountability, many workers will face more layoffs and pay cuts."

The bipartisan plan supported by Honda would change the status quo by mandating that all checked baggage be screened by explosive detection equipment. It would also require the screening of all persons, vehicles and other equipment entering secured areas, including catering and other companies with access to secured areas and requires all airport personnel to submit to background checks.